

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS
NORTHERN DIVISION**

ROBERT TAYLOR,
ADC #091545

PLAINTIFF

V.

3:19CV00337-KGB-JTK

KEVIN MOLDER, et al.

DEFENDANTS

PROPOSED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INSTRUCTIONS

The following recommended disposition has been sent to United States District Judge Kristine G. Baker. Any party may serve and file written objections to this recommendation. Objections should be specific and should include the factual or legal basis for the objection. If the objection is to a factual finding, specifically identify that finding and the evidence that supports your objection. An original and one copy of your objections must be received in the office of the United States District Court Clerk no later than fourteen (14) days from the date of the findings and recommendations. The copy will be furnished to the opposing party. Failure to file timely objections may result in waiver of the right to appeal questions of fact.

If you are objecting to the recommendation and also desire to submit new, different, or additional evidence, and to have a hearing for this purpose before the District Judge, you must, at the same time that you file your written objections, include the following:

1. Why the record made before the Magistrate Judge is inadequate.
2. Why the evidence proffered at the hearing before the District Judge (if such a Hearing is granted) was not offered at the hearing before the Magistrate Judge.
3. The detail of any testimony desired to be introduced at the hearing before the

District Judge in the form of an offer of proof, and a copy, or the original, of any documentary or other non-testimonial evidence desired to be introduced at the hearing before the District Judge.

From this submission, the District Judge will determine the necessity for an additional evidentiary hearing, either before the Magistrate Judge or before the District Judge.

Mail your objections and “Statement of Necessity” to:

Clerk, United States District Court
Eastern District of Arkansas
600 West Capitol Avenue, Suite A149
Little Rock, AR 72201-3325

DISPOSITION

I. Introduction

Plaintiff Robert Taylor is an inmate confined at the Poinsett County Detention Center (Jail), who filed this pro se 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action against four named Defendants, complaining about conditions of confinement at the Jail (Doc. No. 2). This Court granted Plaintiff’s Motion to Proceed in forma pauperis on November 26, 2019, and directed him to submit an Amended Complaint, noting that he failed to include any specific allegations of improper conduct by any of the Defendants (Doc. No. 4). Plaintiff has now submitted an Amended Complaint. (Doc. No. 5)

Having reviewed Plaintiff’s Amended Complaint, the Court finds it should be dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.

II. Screening

The Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA) requires federal courts to screen prisoner complaints seeking relief against a governmental entity, officer, or employee. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). The Court must dismiss a complaint or portion thereof if the prisoner has raised claims

that: (a) are legally frivolous or malicious; (b) fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or (c) seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b).

An action is frivolous if “it lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact.” Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989). Whether a plaintiff is represented by counsel or is appearing pro se, his complaint must allege specific facts sufficient to state a claim. See Martin v. Sargent, 780 F.2d 1334, 1337 (8th Cir.1985).

An action fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted if it does not plead “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.” Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007). In reviewing a pro se complaint under § 1915(e)(2)(B), the Court must give the complaint the benefit of a liberal construction. Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972). The Court must also weigh all factual allegations in favor of the plaintiff, unless the facts alleged are clearly baseless. Denton v. Hernandez, 504 U.S. 25, 32 (1992).

III. Facts and Analysis

In his Original Complaint, Plaintiff complained about no hot water in his cell for thirty-nine days. (Doc. No. 2, p. 4) In the November 26, 2019 Order, the Court noted that Plaintiff failed to include specific facts concerning his allegations or the named Defendants. (Doc. No. 4, p. 3) The Court then directed Plaintiff to submit an Amended Complaint, which would render his Original Complaint without legal effect, and which should: **“1) name all the parties he believes deprived him of his constitutional rights and whom he wishes to sue in this action; 2) provide specific facts against each named Defendant in a simple, concise, and direct manner; 3) indicate whether he is suing each Defendant in his/her individual or official capacity, or in**

both capacities; 4) state how he was harmed; and 5) state whether he is incarcerated as a pretrial detainee. Plaintiff must set forth specific facts concerning the allegations he has set forth including, where applicable, dates, times and places.” (Id., p. 4)

In the Amended Complaint, Plaintiff again complains about the lack of hot water in his cell for a total of fifty-six days, despite his complaints to the Jailer. (Doc. No. 5, p. 4) In order to support a claim for relief against Defendants pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983, Plaintiff must allege that a person acting under the color of state law deprived him of some Constitutional right. Griffin-El v. MCI Telecommunications Corp., et al., 835 F.Supp. 1114, 1118 (E.D.MO 1993). Plaintiff states he is serving a sentence as a result of a judgment of conviction; therefore, the Court will analyze his claims under the Eighth Amendment.

Conditions which “deprive inmates of the minimal civilized measure of life’s necessities,” may be considered cruel and unusual, and therefore, unconstitutional. See Rhodes v. Chapman, 452 U.S. 337, 347 (1981). “Conditions of confinement, however, constitute cruel and unusual punishment ‘only when they have a mutually enforcing effect that produces the deprivation of a single, identifiable human need such as food, warmth, or exercise.’” Id., (quoting Wilson v. Seiter, 501 U.S. 294, 304 (1991)). “Although the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment bars more than physical torture, ‘discomfort compelled by conditions of confinement, without more, does not violate the amendment.’” Martin v. Byrd, No. 4:07cv01184SWW, 2008 WL 686936 * 4 (E.D.Ark.2008) (quoting Smith v. Coughlin, 748 F.2d 783, 787 (2d Cir. 1984) (other citations omitted.))

In this case, Plaintiff merely complains about the lack of hot water in his cell. He does not allege a lack of hot water for showers; therefore, the Court is unclear how the lack of hot

water in his cell could constitute cruel and unusual punishment. He also does not specify how the four named Defendants have violated his Constitutional rights.

Therefore, given Plaintiff's vague allegations concerning uncomfortable conditions, the Court finds that Plaintiff's claims against Defendants should be dismissed, for failure to state an Eighth Amendment claim for relief.

IV. Conclusion

IT IS, THEREFORE, RECOMMENDED that:

1. Plaintiff's Complaint against Defendants be DISMISSED with prejudice, for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.
2. This dismissal constitutes a "strike" within the meaning of the PLRA.¹
3. The Court certify that an in forma pauperis appeal from an Order and Judgment dismissing this action would not be in good faith, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3).

IT IS SO RECOMMENDED this 10th day of December, 2019.



JEROME T. KEARNEY
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

¹The statute provides that a prisoner may not file an in forma pauperis civil rights action or appeal if the prisoner has, on three or more prior occasions, filed an action or appeal that was dismissed as frivolous, malicious or for failure to state a claim, unless the prisoner is under imminent danger of serious physical injury.